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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Leslye Corsiglia

SUBJECT: BUILDER'S CHOICE AWARD

DATE: December 15, 2004

Approved

Date

12-16-04

INFORMATION

In October, Northside Community Center and Mabuhay Court were recognized as the 2004 Project of the Year and received the Grand Award given by *BUILDER* Magazine. This award is chosen based on innovative architecture, quality construction, and a sense of community within the development. The 24th Annual Builder's Choice competition received more than 500 impressive designs.

Mabuhay Court, located in Japantown, is a 96-unit housing development that houses very low-income seniors. Mabuhay Court has been skillfully integrated with a new community center – Northside Community Center – both located on land that the City previously owned. The project is designed to enhance the existing low-density neighborhood.

The development has received outstanding media coverage in the attached *BUILDER* magazine article. The City Council's vision and leadership were vital to making this achievement possible and widely recognized.

LESLYE CORSIGLIA
Director of Housing

Attachment



Come see the New Urban Challenge homes at the 2005 IBS, SEE PAGE 302

**ELECTION SURVEY:
TOP BUILDER CONCERNS**

See page 268

Builder

hanley wood

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

OCTOBER 2004

PLUS:

In the Hot Seat: Fannie and Freddie face major overhaul

China's Boom: Is China the new building frontier?

Differentiation Matters: Learn how to stand out from your competition

BUILDER TECH

Community Intranets: They're making a comeback

BUILDER'S CHOICE

Affordable projects dominate this year's competition

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BUILDER'S CHOICE

Design-sensitive, affordable projects dominate this year's competition.

A DESIGN COMPETITION SUCH AS BUILDER'S Choice is best seen as a snapshot of the building industry, a moment in time when clear themes emerge and trends bubble up to the surface. With this year's Builder's Choice awards there are no doubts: Affordable rules!

Time and time again, as the judges sifted through the merits of hundreds of great designs, affordable projects beat out market-rate entries for inventive architecture and site-sensitive design, especially in urban areas. A dozen affordable projects were winners in this 24th annual Builder's Choice competition. Even the Project of the Year, a seniors community center and apartment

complex in San Jose, Calif., proudly touted its affordable status.

"It's time to throw out all that Tuscan farmhouse stuff," is how one judge summed up the general feeling. What made the most sense—and the most news—were projects that took into account a variety of factors: social concerns, density requirements, and urban realities such as crime.

But there are lessons to be learned that go beyond strictly urban concerns. The best projects, whether they're in gritty West Oakland, Calif., or picture-perfect Harbor Springs, Mich., all have something in common: great design, great construction, and, above all, a great sense of community.

BY KATHLEEN STANLEY, NIGEL F. MAYNARD, DAVID HOLZEL, SHAWN KENNEDY, AND ZACH BLATTNER



PROJECT OF THE YEAR AND GRAND

Northside Community Center + Mabuhay Court


SAN JOSE, CALIF.

BY JUST ABOUT ANY standard, the Project of the Year for 2004 is an unlikely star. It has an odd name: Northside Community Center + Mabuhay Court. It's in California but not in a

part of the state that usually racks up design awards. And it's for low-income seniors, a constituency that doesn't often garner a lot of attention. On paper, it's the kind of project that comes across as noble, for sure, but not necessarily a knockout.

But then you see it and learn the particulars, and its unlikely star billing starts to make sense. Mabuhay Court is just what a successful project should be: It's complex and full of design touches that make a great community. In

CATEGORIES: Project of the Year; Active adult community (grand); **ENTRANT/ARCHITECT:** David Baker + Partners, Architects, San Francisco; **BUILDER:** L + D, San Jose, Calif.; **DEVELOPERS:** City of San Jose; **BRIDGE HOUSING CORP.,** San Francisco; **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Pattillo + Garrett Associates, San Francisco; **INTERIOR DESIGNERS:** Design Mesh, Orinda, Calif.; **David Baker + Partners, Architects**



**BUILDER'S
CHOICE
AWARD**

northside
community
center

450 north north street

short, it's a good place to live. And isn't that the ultimate goal for any residential construction?

First, the particulars. Mabuhay, which means "good fortune" in Tagalog, the language of its predominantly Filipino tenants, is a project that combines two separate uses: 96 low-income, senior rental units and a new, 16,000-square-foot community center. It's located adjacent to Japan Town, a historic neighborhood near downtown San Jose. It was designed by David Baker + Partners, Architects, a San Francisco firm that's known for its work in the world of affordable housing. And it was developed by a partnership that included the City of San Jose and San Francisco-based BRIDGE Housing Corp., California's largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing.

Back in 1995, the City of San Jose prepared a master plan for expanding the 3,250-square-foot Northside Community Center,



PHOTOS: MICHELLE PECKHAM



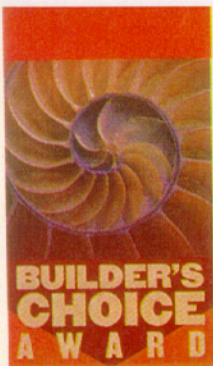
a vibrant neighborhood gathering place, and adding seniors housing on city-owned land that had once been a maintenance yard. Working with a seniors community organization, David Baker + Partners proposed integrating the separate elements by expanding the housing site into the air rights over an addition to the existing seniors center. "That allowed us to lower the density to three floors and to extend the project into a greater footprint," says project architect Kevin Wilcock. The three-story housing structures not only blend in better with the surrounding neighborhood, but they were also more economical to construct than a four-story building.

The 96 apartments, which rent from \$300 to \$750, are a mix of studio and one- and two-bedroom units. Many of the apartments have private balconies and porches linked to walk-up stoops, which mimic the neighboring homes. Parking is provided in surface lots and in a half-level depressed concrete garage. All the units are adaptable for the disabled.

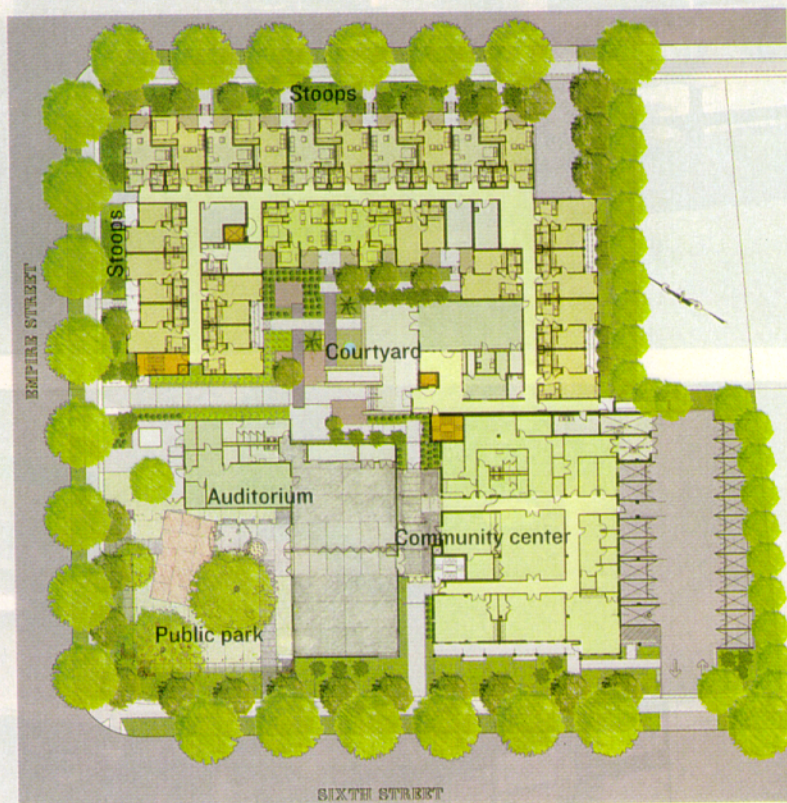
That's the big picture. But Mabuhay makes its mark in the details, the often economical touches that distinguish it from other, more pedestrian projects. The walk-up apartments all have their own front entries, something the architects fought for. "Typically, a one-point entry that's controlled and secured" is employed at complexes such as this, says Wilcock.

Stained wood and other natural materials were used throughout; concrete was also stained, for more interest. Sun shades





a vibrant neighborhood gathering place



extend over some of the windows to add shadow and texture to the elevation (and lower the AC bill). Trellises help break up the streetscape, as do strategic applications of paint in warm earth tones. Courtyards offer residents common spaces that are places for social interaction, areas Wilcock calls

"gathering knuckles." Interior corridors get windows at the end so that there's always a glimpse outside. And throughout the 2.19-acre site, there are pieces of art—some sort of focal point—that draw people into the courtyards, down a hallway, or over to the community center.

"We typically don't have a lot of money to spend on these projects, so we tried to focus the special events, the moments in the buildings, into a few special places," says Wilcock. "We tried to keep the rest of the project very simple and straightforward." —Kathleen Stanley (see page 152)